



Conscious Dialog
with
MCIVE

Presented by

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Understanding MCIVE

We have developed a technique for improving communication that is used in just about every one of our RecoverYES programs. We call this technique MCIVE (pronounced “Mclvy”), which stands for “Mirror, Check, Invite, Validate, and Empathize.”

MCIVE is a way to have an intentional and conscious dialog with our fellow humans. It may be a bit too complex to use when you’re talking to a four-year-old, but it’s a powerful tool for defusing conflict between adults in a household.

MCIVE, and conscious dialog in general, help prevent conversations from turning into power struggles. Conversations can serve the purpose of communication rather than conflict, and can eliminate the tensions that lead to a persistent feeling of unrest.

The MCIVE strategy is actually pretty straightforward. It works just as you would expect from the words that make up the acronym.

- Mirror - You Mirror by listening closely to what you are hearing from the speaker. You confirm to the speaker that they have your attention by restating what they’ve said. This lets them know you’re listening, and it also helps to validate their thoughts and feelings.
- Check - After you mirror, you Check. You say something like, “Do I have that right?” or “Is that what you meant?”—and pause for a response. This also validates the speaker while at the same time allowing for additional clarity as you talk to one another.
- Invite - The next step is to Invite the other person to provide more information. You can also ask for more clarification. This is especially useful when you’re just starting to use this tactic with the significant others in your life. They may be a little “freaked-out” at first. They may even feel disappointed when they experience MCIVE sapping the passion (even the negative passion) out of a

charged conversation. By inviting them to share more of their thoughts and feelings, you'll reassure them that you really do want to get to the bottom of the issue you're discussing.

- Validate - By describing a similar experience—or at least imagining out loud how you would react in a similar situation—you can Validate what the other person has shared. This is essential, because your aim is . . .
- Empathize - . . . To establish that you Empathize with the person you're talking to. And that's one of the main reasons to use MCIVE:

to establish that you have empathy for others, that you are prepared to understand what they're going through, and that you want to find a resolution to the conflict that works for everyone.

MCIVE can revolutionize a relationship. By creating framework for communication without a power struggle and establishing a connection based on true empathy, you open a space in which you can resolve all the various differences that arise in a relationship—including money issues, childrearing issues, sexual issues, and so many others—without creating winners and losers.

MCIVE mends broken relationships, and by defusing the emotions behind our individual perceptions, it allows everyone involved to change their behavior without repressing their emotions. It creates an opening in which either person can say, “stay exactly the way you are, but please start helping out with the housework!”

MCIVE is a powerful tool that will transform your interpersonal communication especially when confrontation is necessary due to disagreement.

Guidelines for Using MCIVE

To begin, ask the person you would like to confront, “Are you open?” or “Are you able to hold the space while I talk to you about a specific issue?”

Once you have agreement and the space for a healthy discussion, it is important to stay on script to avoid blaming/shaming language.

Speaker Script

1. Specific observable behavior - “When you do this...”
2. “I feel...glad, angry, fear, lonely, hurt, shame, guilt, sad (share emotions).”
3. “And, my judgment is...” or “I make up that...” “And, I could be wrong.”
4. Share some history going back as far as you can remember – “It reminds me of...”
5. What are you longing for? “My spiritual longing (in this situation) is...”
6. “My request is...”

The person being confronted mirrors/summarizes back to confirm that they “got it right.”

Listener Script

1. Mirror/Summarize “You said that...” or “What I heard is...”
2. Check “Is that correct?”
3. Invite “Is there more?”
4. Validate “It makes sense to me.”
5. Empathize “Could there be another feeling...such as...?”
6. Finally, the request (#6 above) is acknowledged with “Yes, No, Maybe.” If “Maybe,” then there is negotiation until a satisfactory resolution is achieved.

If the confrontation is “highly charged,” it is common that the Listener will want to share their own feelings and initiate a related confrontation. It is best to wait 24 hours before doing this providing time to process what has been shared along with the accompanying feelings.